

THE
CAPTAIN'S BRIDE,

A TALE OF THE WAR,

BY

W. D. HERRINGTON, 3d N. C. CAVALRY.

Author of "The Refugee's Niece," "The Doctor's
Daughter," etc.



ILLUSTRATED BY

RALEIGH:

WILLIAM B. SMITH.

1864.

from
Mrs Wt. Nicholson
Charlotte
N.C.

A decorative border of various leaves and flowers frames the entire page. The leaves are detailed with veins, and the flowers are small and delicate.

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An illustration in the center of the page depicts a woman in a long, flowing dress sitting on a grassy hill. She is looking up at a man who is standing and looking down at her. To the left, a young girl is playing a harp. To the right, a young boy is playing a flute. The scene is set in a lush, wooded area with many trees and bushes.

ILLUSTRATED MERCURY,
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WILLIAM B. SMITH,
1864.
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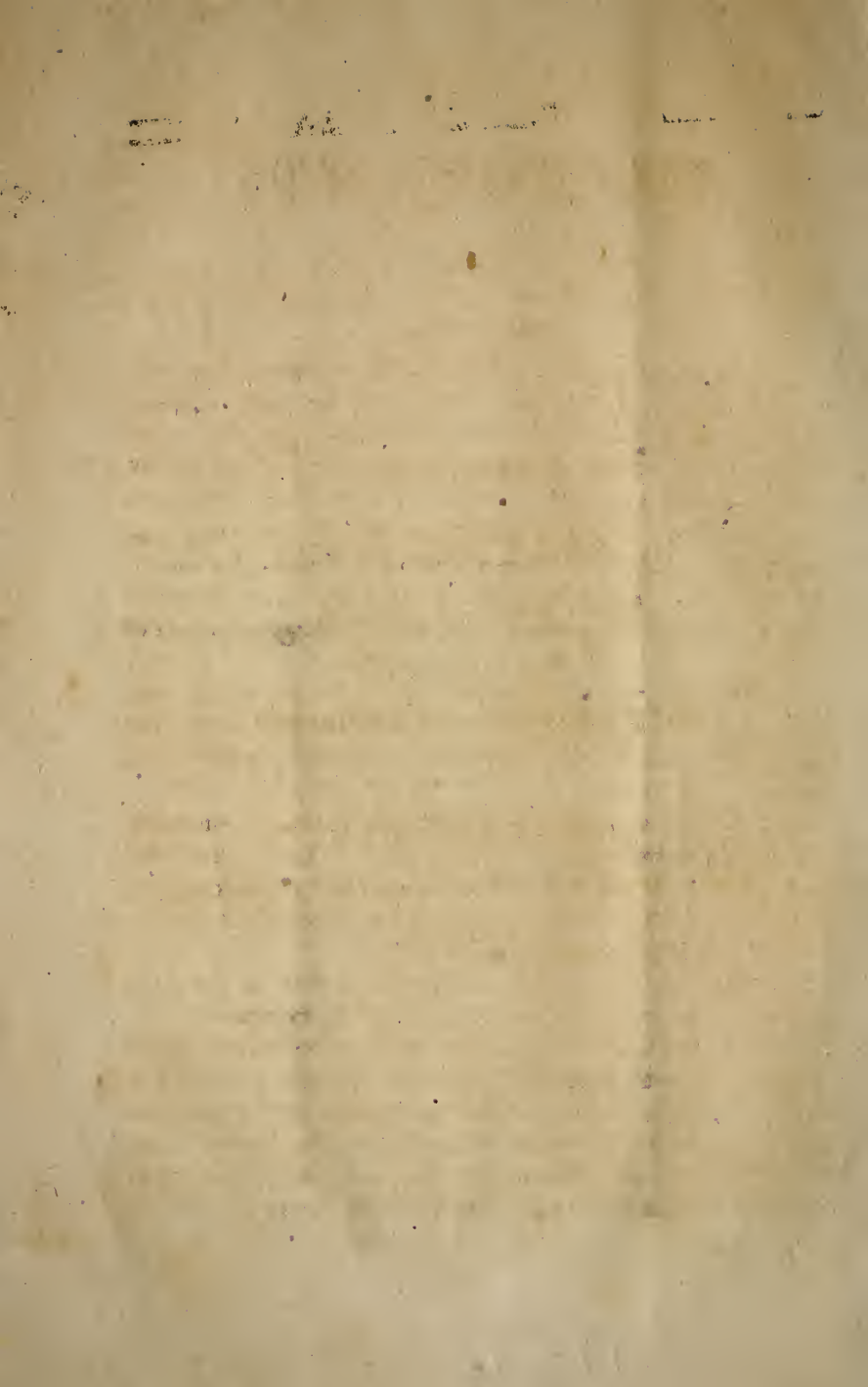
WILLIAM B. SMITH,

in the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the Confederate States
for the District of Pamlico of North Carolina.

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TO
C. PERKINS, ESQ.,
MEMBER OF THE N. C. LEGISLATURE,
IS THIS LITTLE STORY
MOST RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED,
AS AN HUMELE TRIBUTE
OF GRATITUDE
TO HIS KINDNESS AND BENEVOLENCE, BY HIS EVER GRATEFUL WARD,
THE AUTHOR.

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THE CAPTAIN'S BRIDE.

CHAPTER I.

As the dawn began to disperse the darkness from the earth, and the golden azure mounting the eastern skies, foretold the birth of a new day, the sharp jarring peal of a rifle cannon rent asunder the calm morning air, and echoed and re-echoed among the hills and swamps of the surrounding country. In a few minutes a cavalryman rushed in camp, his charger at his topmost speed. The bugler sounded the alarm, and after some hurried confusion, Captain Horton formed his company of Partizan Rangers in line of battle.

"The enemy are advancing!" said the much excited courier, and as he spoke another jar from the rifle field-piece shook the earth beneath their feet; and was followed by a volley of small arms.

"Take sixteen men and support the picket, reconnoitre the enemy's strength, and hold in check at the creek as long as possible. When you are over-powered fall back to the mill bridge, where I will make arrangements to fight as long as our supply of ammunition lasts."

These orders were given by Captain Horton to Lieutenant Emitson, and were immediately put in execution.

This occurred a few days before the commencement of the memorable seven days battles around Richmond. All the troops, except enough to watch the movements of the enemy at his several points of occupation, were removed from the department and concentrated to take part in that sanguinary conflict to save the Capitol of the country.

Captain Horton with his gallant little band of one hundred well mounted Partizans was left unaided to confront the enemy numbering five hundred infantry, a battery of artillery, and a company of cavalry, occupying one of the towns in the department of North Carolina. The enemy were, however, well acquainted with Captain Horton. Time and again had he pounced like an eagle upon their unsuspecting credulity, and bore away their out-posts, their foraging and scouting parties—until his name alone had become a terror to their imaginations. Notwithstanding this Captain Horton did not slumber with this fearful odds against him. He saw at a glance, and appreciated, the responsibility that had devolved upon him. Thousands of rich farmers, straining every nerve to make sustenance for the army, looked to him for protection against a thieving enemy. Every day defenceless women and children thronged his camp begging with tear-bedimmed eyes to be saved from the hands of a ruthless foe. Added to these, he as well as most of his men were fighting for their very hearth-stones.

The town occupied by the enemy was situated upon the northern bank of one of the principal rivers in the Old North State. The river ran in almost a direct line east and west, and intermingled the crystal waters of the Blue Ridge mountains with those of the great Atlantic. This added a new arm of strength to the enemy, as the river was navigable several miles above the town, up which, with his boats he could lay waste to the surrounding country. But as he had few boats that could operate on the river owing to its narrowness, and its undulating banks, behind which concealed riflemen, were more than an equal in a contest, even with these huge monsters Captain Horton had few fears from that direction. Making almost a right angle with one inclining somewhat to the west, wound a large creek, and emptied its waters into the river a mile above the town.—On both sides of this creek were dense mirey swamps so that to cross it was impossible, except at the several public

crossings at which were in former times built bridges. By way of the direct road leading from the town to where Captain Horton had taken his position to the crossing of this stream was seven miles. Five miles farther on ran another stream parallel with the first, and emptied also its waters into the river. Across this latter stream was the mill bridge referred to in Captain Horton's order. When he was left without the least hope of aid from any quarter, his first precaution was, to destroy all the bridges crossing this first stream : seeing of course, the fruitlessness of endeavoring to keep the enemy within the town. This offered the first impediment to an advance. Wherever a crossing might be effected, it would be done at a fearful loss of life ; and when this was done a greater impediment yet had to be met at the mill bridge where, as Captain Horton said, they could never pass so long as his supply of ammunition lasted. This first creek, though adopted by Captain Horton as a picket line, yet the country beyond it was not entirely abandoned. The enemy did not dare to advance beyond the range of the guns mounting the breast-work surrounding the town, except with almost their entire command.

Captain Horton had the one plan, and its alternatives ever before his eyes ; if the enemy advanced directly upon his position to give him battle as above described ; but if he choose to pass him by unnoticed after crossing the first stream, and, advancing through the country in a different direction, his alternative was to transport his command to the opposite side of the river, marshal his available force, cut the enemy's communication, and harass his rear until a force could be concentrated in front to stop his advance.

As he promised Lieutenant Emitson, the necessary dispositions were made at the bridge to give the enemy a handsome reception. He was patiently waiting the return of the Lieutenant, and the advance of the foe. His monotony would now and then be broken by the report of the cannon at the bridge, but nothing more.

"Surely," he said, "Emitson has not allowed them to cross undisturbed."

The Lieutenant returned very soon.

"The enemy have driven back our pickets from the creek and are throwing up an entrenchment," said he, handing the Captain a note backed with a pencil.

"They no doubt intend to re-build the bridge," said the Captain opening the note. "What disposition have you made of the picket, Lieutenant."

"I ordered them to fall back beyond the range of the enemy's guns; and to resume the watch. I have a scout also concealed at the creek to watch the enemy's demonstrations."

The note read as follows:

"CAPTAIN HORTON:—I have just time to write this note and convey it across to your pickets. The Yankees do not intend to advance farther than to drive off your picket and establish their own in their stead on this side of the creek. Give yourself no alarm; but of course be vigilant. Cross the creek at the old landing and I will meet you at the little hillock on this side at four o'clock, p. m. Then I will tell you all. There is no danger at that place.

Yours in much trouble,

ESTELLE."

Captain Horton folded the note and placing it in his coat pocket ordered his men back to camp, evincing in his countenance a look of excited curiosity intermingled with disappointed satisfaction.

CHAPTER II.

Four o'clock found Captain Horton faithful to the request. He had prostrated himself upon the little gum hill surrounded except on one side by a dense forest. On this side a narrow strip of high land led to an opening beyond. How long seemed every minute of delay, with nothing to keep him company save perhaps a little summer bird drawn hither by curiosity to take a close examination of this monster, who had dared to trespass upon its haunts. Distinctly audible to his ears sounded the axes of the enemy fortifying the position taken by them in the morning.

"Are they human like myself," he soliloquized, "made by the same God, ruled by the same supreme Deity, occupying the same continent, speaking the same language, who have mothers and sisters like myself, and still we are deadly foes; seeking each other's lives."

With such thoughts as these passing through his mind he passed away one long, long hour.

"She will not come. Something has happened," he said as he rose and stretched his gaze in the direction from whence he had come, and was now about to return.

A low whisper greeted his ear. He started and turned quickly on his heel. His eyes met a human form. It was Estelle. The beautiful fairy formed, the terrestrial angel, Estelle; the only object that bound his heart to earth, that which animated and urged him on to deeds of valor in the hour of trial and peril. Estelle was a far off scion of the Normon French, and in her bright black eyes she showed still the spirit of her intrepid ancestry. As their countenances met she forced a smile.

"You have been waiting I reckon, Captain."

"Yes, Estelle," he answered, grasping her extended hand, "I have been here one hour or more. What has caused your delay?"

"My brother, whom you know holds a commission in the Federal army returned home this morning. To establish a force between my home, and your command is the cause of their advance. They will return when he has accomplished the object of his visit."

"Pusillanimous policy. But such selfish motives seem to actuate even the head of their Government. I am not surprised. But Estelle, what is the object of your brother's visit?"

"He has come," said she, choking down a sigh, "to force me into a marriage with Ed. Alston, whom from my childhood I have never looked upon otherwise than as a friend. He accompanies my brother dressed in Yankee uniform. I have treated him very coldly; and as they know of our attachment, they watch me continually. This has been the cause of my delay."

"Fiends! incarnate," said the Captain seating himself upon the earth and drawing her down by his side. They can never succeed while the blood in my veins runs warm. But you had better go with me now, and continue with my mother or some of your friends until——"

"No, I will not be driven from my home. I will stay to convince them of their folly." Hardly had these words escaped her lips when a hurried footstep behind them convinced them of an intrusion. Captain Horton caught his hand upon his pistol holt and attempted to rise. But too late. Two pistols were presented to his head, and a stern voice shouted "resist and you shall die." Estelle caught his arm and whispered, "forbear."

"Estelle," said her brother in a pedantic voice, "I ought to discountenance you hereafter as my sister."

"You are at liberty to do so," she answered in a firm voice.

"While I have been away striving to *restore* peace to the country, my only sister has been carrying on a disgraceful alliance with——"

"Its false ; and the intimation is unworthy of a brother," she interrupted.

"Yes, you have brought disgrace upon me by this alliance with an enemy to me and to all mankind, and a traitor to his country."

This insult almost caused the blood in Captain Horton's veins to take fire. But what could he do ?

"*Disgrace upon you ! A traitor to his country !*" she answered smilingly, "beautiful language for one who has brought disgrace upon his family by selling his *honor* and his *birthright* for the paltry sum of a commission in a vandal army—an army who wars upon defenceless women and children—a band of disgraceful thieves and cut-throats.—Does not the word *traitor* burn upon your lips ?"

"I would take this abuse from no one else."

"Nor would I take your intimations from any one else."

"But your eloquence will not alter my determination. I have come to see the consummation of a marriage between Alston and yourself, and it shall be."

"It shall never be. I do not love him, and I will never marry one whom I do not love. So desist brother ; you cannot force me, I am ready to die, but to yield, never !"

"I am your senior and will be your advisor. I know that you are betrothed to Alston, and the engagement shall be fulfilled."

"Would you consign me to a life of misery ? Is this the brother who promised a dying mother to watch over my wellfare. Oh ! faithless humanity," said she, bursting into tears, "have I a brother, and yet not one friend in this wide world whose hands are unbound to save me."

"Miss Estelle," said Alston stepping forward, "say that you have never made the most solemn vows to me, and I will release you at once from the engagement."

"I may have done so Mr. Alston in jest ; but Heaven knows that I have never loved you ; and your unmanly conduct now makes me hate you."

"No Estelle," said the Lieutenant, her brother, "this *traitor* has poisoned your mind, and his life shall pay the forfeit."

Captain Horton could no longer keep down the anger that these cowardly insults had aroused in his nature. He sprang to his feet, drew his repeater from its holster and said :

"Sir, my life is not worth a farthing to me now, and these cowardly insults shall be printed here upon the brow of this little hill in characters of blood."

Estelle rushed fearlessly between the two presented pistols, and caught Captain Horton's arm.

"It is madness Captain, do not sacrifice your life, but live for my sake."

"I give Estelle into your charge. Accompany her home," said her brother, addressing Alston.

"I can go alone," said Estelle.

But Alston took her arm and forced her away.

"Deliver your pistol to me," said the Lieutenant to Captain Horton.

Just at this moment a noise on the opposite side of the hill attracted their attention, and a detachment of Captain Horton's men rushed upon the hill. The Lieutenant seeing the peril of his position, covered himself by Captain Horton and made a precipitate retreat.

"Stand aside Captain," shouted Lieutenant Emitson.

"Hold Emitson ! hold !" said he, "the enemy are only a few hundred yards from this place."

The enemy had already been attracted to the place, and were then in view.

"I anticipated this treachery, Captain," said Lieutenant Emitson, "and have made all possible haste to your relief."

"Say not 'treachery' Lieutenant, but 'misfortune.' Oh !

could your arrival have been but one minute earlier ! Poor Estelle," said he rubbing his hands, " but I will release her or loose my life in the attempt."

" We all owe them a debt of revenge," answered the Lieutenant. As the enemy were now bearing down upon them, they were compelled to retreat. .

Captain Horton returned to his camp with his plans for the release of Estelle fully decided upon. By taking his men twelve miles up the creek he could cross at a ford known only to himself, and in four hours he could come up exactly in rear of the enemy's position. This he resolved to do, hoping, notwithstanding the fearful odds that he would have to encounter, with the advantage of a surprise in a night attack, to be able if nothing more, to recover Estelle and take her within his own lines.

The plan was put in execution, and at the hour of eleven when the enemy had retired to slumber in peaceful security, Captain Horton hurled his hundred furious horsemen like an avalanche into their camp, which lay in an hundred yards of Estelle's home. The enemy fled in every direction panic stricken and dismayed ; but Captain Horton was so eager for the prize, he rushed headlong in front of his command, and his horse stumbling, precipitated him senseless upon the earth in the midst of the enemy, when, of course, he fell into their hands. Lieutenant Emitson assumed command and still continued to urge his men upon the enemy, dealing a perfect malestorm of death in their midst ; but he hurdled them in a mass finally upon the banks of the stream, where they either had to fight or surrender. Taking advantage of the disorder into which the contest had thrown the horsemen, they commenced a stubborn resistance, and from advantage of numbers, very soon so far recovered as to be able to make an assault upon Lieutenant Emitson's confused column. He resisted it with spirit, but finally had to fall back, thereby leaving Captain Horton a helpless prisoner in the hands of the enemy.

CHAPTER III.

Estelle had heard the attack made on the Yankee camp, and had divined its object. She ever felt sure of the defeat of the expedition ; but she did not anticipate the trouble that awaited her.

As soon as the men were restored to quiet, and there was no probability of the Rebels returning, her brother made haste to apprise her of his victory

" We have given those impertinent midnight assassins a decent thrashing ; and what is more cheering and glorious, their chief,—*your lover* is a prisoner, safe into our hands," said he in a boasting and menacing manner. For a minute she was speechless, for what could she say. The case, if true, and she could not doubt it, was hopeless.

" He is a prisoner of war, isn't he brother ?" she asked at last in a humiliated voice.

" No, he has forfeited the respect due a prisoner of war, and is held subject to my orders and disposal ; and Estelle unless you make amends for your impudence this afternoon, you shall witness his torture . With this threat to subdue her indomitable will, he left her to her own thoughts.

She past the night in indiscrivable anguish—between hope and despair. A thousand plans for his release passed through her mind, but were all attended with some insurmountable obstacle.

The night—a sleepless one past away at last. Her pillow was drenched with her tears. Only one hope cheered her troubled bosom. She resolved to try her powers of persuasion upon the heart of her brother. Surely he was her brother. The same blood coursed each others veins. She heard

him promise a dying mother to love and take care of her.—It could not be that one year's association, with heartless companions even, had made him a brute. She expected his sympathy. She was not the same stubborn Estelle of yesterday. Her spirit was crushed and she must yield.

She arranged her toilet, and hastened to the parlor, where she expected to find her brother alone. But not so. She found him accompanied by Alston, who were making merry over that greatest curse to the human family, the Bacchanalian Board.

The sight of Alston and her brother's dissipation, arouse d her ire anew, but she must suppress it now, and giving Alston one look that made his guilty cowardly soul crouch like a whipped ear, she beckoned her brother to one side. He rose and followed her into another apartment. When he took a seat, she knelt by his side. The humiliation of that proud spirit and not penitence, caused a tear to course its way over her flushed cheek.

"Brother," said she, "I have knelt here to ask the release of Captain Horton. I am your sister; and as such I make this request. You are my only relative that I know of on earth—and therefore the only source from which I can expect sympathy and protection.

"Your last words to our dying mother in this room, was a most solemn promise to look after my welfare in life—to guard my destiny. Surely memory and soul have not both forsaken you. If so, let reason tell you not to destroy one who has never done you an injury, and who only holds a political opinion averse to your own, and remember brother if you sacrifice him to your malice, you sacrifice also a sister's happiness. He is the object of my choice. He loves me and I love him. I am engaged to him, and I can love none other. Now brother, I have told all; and will you release him? I on yesterday, in a fit of passion, caused by your insults might have said many hard things to you; for which I feel sorry this morning, and am willing to make any

amends that you may ask. I ask only one reasonable request, when that is granted then I, brother, am your servant. If I am never to see him again, it will at least be a consolation to me to know that he is unharmed."

"You are through, I suppose, and you are quite an humble little sister this morning," he said in sneering ridicule.—But Estelle my plans are fixed,—my promise is given.—The blood of fifty of my comrades, the work of his hands last night cries in tones of thunder against Captain Horton, while the moans of an hundred wounded men call curses upon his head. He shall never marry you. But nevertheless, he can have the opportunity of taking the oath of allegiance to the United States, and thereby save his life, if you will promise to marry Alston immediately, and go North."

The heartlessness of this proposition sent a pang of sorrow to her heart, and crushed her soul beneath a load of despair. She saw that her plan was not successful. All seemed lost. She rose up, seated herself upon a sofa, and burying her face in her hands bursted into a violent fit of grief. But necessity is indeed the mother of invention, and when almost the last ray of hope had fled, something seemed to suggest another plan to her mind. It was based on deception, and as deception is a woman's fort, it gave her new hope. "I have thrown grass," she thought, "and it availed nothing, I am excusable now to try what virtue there is in a stone."

"Brother, I am willing to make any, almost any sacrifice to save Captain Horton's life, but he will not take the oath. If you will agree to release him unconditionally, and I can love Alston, and I will try, I will consent to your proposition and give you a positive answer this evening."

"I will also make up my mind by that time," he answered.

She drew her pencil from her pocket, wrote a few words on a piece of paper, folded it, handed it to her brother, and requested him to hand it to Alston. He received it with a smile of satisfaction and departed on the mission. She wrote

also a short note to Lieutenant Emitson, and by means of an under-ground telegraph, in the course of an hour it was placed in his hands.

In a few minutes Alston made his appearance, for the note requested an interview. He looked awkward and agitated, but it was a part of her plan to re-assure him.

"Take a seat *Edward*," she said smiling. This agitated him more. "I reckon," she resumed, "that you have thought my conduct very strange. It is my disposition you know to make my love matters romantic; but I reckon now I have carried the matter far enough, and I have concluded hereafter to make our meeting more agreeable. You must pardon my little frivolities."

"Certainly *Estelle*, certainly!" he said with the greatest emotions of delight, "I have been very silly not to have seen more clearly into the matter before, but you girls are always capable of deception."

"But," she answered, "don't let brother know it yet, I want us to surprise him."

"*All right*."

"Come this evening at 3 o'clock and we will take a walk to our old play ground, and talk over the pleasures of by-gone days. I have wearied myself with this excitement, and you must excuse me until then," and rising from her seat she presented him a bough of *arbutus*.

Springing to his feet, he departed in a perfect ecstasy of surprise and delight. *Estelle* smiled at the successful execution of the ground-work of her scheme.

CHAPTER IV.

All was quiet in the Yankee encampment. The day was spent in burying the dead that had fallen the previous night, and preparing against another like surprise.

The hour of three arrived, and faithful to promise came Edward Alston, unspeakably elated with glowing anticipations of the future. Little did he think that the halter was prepared for his neck, and that with his own hands he was to tie the fatal knot. Estelle might be censured by the world, but whatever others were disposed to say she cared not, she was determined to exhaust all the means at her command to defeat her brother's plans, and save unharmed the object of her affections at all cost.

She met Alston at the door with a smile, and taking his arm, they set off for the proposed evening's walk. The walk to the old play ground upon the banks of the creek was spent in merry conversation, in making amends for past offences and explanations. As they neared the edge of the stream, four Confederate soldiers stepped from behind an excavation in the banks, and in a decided voice told Alston that he was a prisoner. He was dismayed and thunder struck. There was no farther necessity for deception on the part of Estelle. Her plan was fully developed. Giving the guard some hurried instructions, they bore their charge away. Estelle watched them until they were beyond all danger, when she hastily retraced her footsteps back to the house. Now the dreadful ordeal had to be passed. She must meet an unreasonable brother exasperated by defeat. What might he not do? But in the

spirit of the true heroine she resigned herself to the unalterable decrees of fate, and bowed her spirit in humble submission at the shrine of fortune. She halted at the door to nerve her courage for the emergency, and to place a little dagger that she wore in her bosom in a convenient position.

She entered the parlor and found her brother seated smoking a cigar in dreamy reverie. Her footstep aroused him:

"Why Estelle," he said drowsily, "you did not walk long. Where is Edward?"

"In the hands of Lieutenant Emitson," she answered decidedly.

He sprang to his feet in amazement.

"Say that again Estelle!"

"In the hands of Lieutenant Emitson—a hostage for Captain Horton," she repeated.

"I'll be —," said he in the most violent fit of passion, "if I intend thus to be *buffed* and *bullied* from my purpose by mortal mankind—*woman*—*sister*—no, by—not even by my mother. I swear by eternal Heaven if Edward Alston, a United States soldier, is not returned to this house by to-morrow noon, that I will *burn before your eyes* this outlawed villian, Horton. Do you remember that? And then if one hair on Alston's head is molested, I will place you in the hands of the commander of this department to stand the consequences."

"I measured the distance," answered Estelle coolly, "before I began the journey. But brother, whatever measure you meet to Captain Horton, shall be measured to Edward Alston again. Your vain threats will not daunt my spirits nor alter my purpose. The seal is set and stamped, 'an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth.' I care not what the consequences may be to myself."

He strode like a frantic maniac back and forth across the room. He saw the fruitlessness of endeavoring to im-

timidate a spirit that feared *not death*. He felt that he was defeated—hopelessly defeated. He halted before her and looked in her countenance. He saw there depicted the inflexible determination—the case-hardened will. What could he do? His fiendish nature could have crushed her from existence, but he feared to attempt it.

“Heretofore,” he said, “I have been lenient towards you Estelle, but hereafter I shall alter my purpose. I will send over Captain Horton in exchange for Alston, but you shall be incarcerated in one of the darkest dungeons in Fort Warren, where you shall eke out your life in ignominy and shame, where pity nor mercy can never reach you. Where you shall never see a human face, except of him who will come to tantalize you.”

“I am consoled,” said she smiling, for the thought that Captain Horton was to be set free had brightened her hopes, “to know that none of your hellish prisons are so dark but that the sunbeams of mercy from Heaven can penetrate their gloom. And there, even there, I will laugh at your folly, and hold sweet converse with that God who causes it to rain upon the just and upon the unjust.”

He left the room, and locking the door, took the key with him. His threat was a dreadful one. She pondered its consequences alone. But she felt consoled. She had gained a victory, though it might be dearly bought. Then in her mind she saw Captain Horton free once more. She hoped—yes she hoped—but what did she hope.

From a window she could see all that transpired in the camp. She wept for two hours over her fearful destiny.—“I have no friend save my God, and He has forsaken me,” she sobbed. She turned her eyes again towards the camp, and saw her brother accompanied by Alston walking hurriedly towards headquarters, and engaged in eager conversation. She felt that Captain Horton was free.

There was too, some excitement. She fell upon her knees and in an humble, submissive prayer, thanked God

that although she was to suffer herself, that she had been the means of saving all that she loved on earth from an ignominious death. The tears that accompanied this prayer were analized in heaven.

As she re-seated herself, a *whizzing* sound attracted her attention, and then a deafening *crash*. A shell bursted in the midst of the Yankee camp and enveloped it in a sulphurous smoke, another, and still another *crash* in quick succession until the houses trembled with the vibrations. Confusion and panic siezed upon the men, and they ran in every direction, while excited: officers were swearing and endeavoring to restore order. Videttes from the rear came in at break-neck speed shouting "the Rebels have crossed the creek above and are advancing to cut off our retreat." This made the consternation complete, and a general stampede, leaving accoutrements and equipage, ensued.

From a position taken for that purpose Captain Horton could witness the enemy's movement. His command had been strengthened by a regiment of Infantry and four pieces of Artillery. The Infantry had been sent to cut off the enemy's retreat, while Captain Horton with his company for a support had attracted the enemy at the creek, with the artillery to drive him from his position. But when this was done Captain Horton could not effect a crossing; and when he saw that the enemy made so hurried a retreat he ordered the firing to cease, and, accompanied by Lieutenant Emitson, he crossed the creek to see the spoils of his victory. There were still some stragglers loitering in the abandoned camp. By making his way through the woods he evaded their observation and gained the house, where he hoped to hear what had become of Estelle. Before the gate stood an ambulance, with two horses before it. He at once divined its object and though he felt that he was incurring a fearful risk, yet something had to be done, and done quickly. By chance he got within a few paces of the door, and stopped to take an observation of

the interior. Near the center of the room sat Estelle, her hands bound and her head resting upon a table weeping. Her brother and Alston were making some hurried preparations to leave.

"No matter what danger attends it I will attempt to rescue her," whispered Captain Horton to Lieutenant Emitson.

"It is best" answered the Lieutenant "our force may not be able to intercept them, owing to some accident."

At this moment they found that they were discovered; and leveling their pistols they fired, and immediately rushed into the house, where simultaneously both parties discharged their pistols at each other. Lieutenant Emitson sank upon his knees lifeless. When the smoke cleared away, Captain Horton found himself in a few paces of Alston, and Estelle's brother prostrated near him a corpse. A single combat ensued. Alston fired his pistol, struck Captain Horton's right arm and so paralyzed it that his pistol dropped from his hand upon the floor. Captain Horton quickly perceived that this accident had placed him in a fearful dilemma. Alston was re-cocking his pistol to dispatch him. In that moment of despair, with his left hand he grasped Alston by the throat, and the suddenness of the assault bore him to the floor and knocked his pistol from his hand, but the loss of the use of one of his hands gave Alston the advantage, and he nearly regained his pistol when Estelle, having extricated her hands from the thongs, rushed to the two combatants, raised her dagger and thrust its sharp point into Alston's heart, with a slight tremor of his frame and a horrid contortion of his countenance his unmanly spirit past away, at the hands of her whose earthly happiness he had sought to destroy.

The force sent to intercept the dying enemy were delayed and did not accomplish their object.

Captain Horton soon recovered from his wound, which was very slight.

The world said that Estelle was worthy and ought to become "The Captain's Bride," and she did.

But who shall fill the place of Lieutenant Emitson?—Thrice noble hero! He had fallen. He offered up himself a living sacrifice upon the altar of his country, and his blood had filled the cup of friendship to the brim. Whose children shall rise up and call him "blessed?"

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
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
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
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